



Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet

Melissa Oesch Demonstrates Recycled Bookbinding at Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea

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BEREA, Ky. – Melissa Oesch, of Lexington, will demonstrate recycled bookbinding techniques, using parts of old books and new materials, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 28, at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea.

Oesch refers to herself as an eco-friendly Kentucky artist and designer who handcrafts one-of-a-kind journals, sketchbooks, and other unique creations from salvaged and up-cycled materials. She is challenged by re-imagining what can be created with discarded and recycled textiles.

"We too often don't recognize the potential within something and write it off as trash," she said. "My tendency is to see potential in materials that others might overlook."

Because Oesch creates with repurposed materials, each finished piece is unique.

Oesch creates her new books and journals by re-using leather, coffee sacks and vintage book covers, and often stitches words and images from nature into her new designs. Mostly self-taught, she experiments using different techniques and combinations. Her inspiration comes from nature, ancient spiritual traditions, and anything whimsical, which she intertwines with ideas of function.

Oesch initially started crafting books because she found journaling to be transformative in her own life. Growing up on a wooded farm in eastern Kentucky, she played among the trees, read books and filled up journals. She began bookbinding in 2005, and finds her work both satisfying and meditative.

Oesch is a juried member of the Kentucky Guild of Artists and Craftsmen and the Kentucky Arts Council's Kentucky Crafted program, and both she and her work are featured in the March 2013 edition of The Crafts Report magazine.

Handmade books by Melissa Oesch are regularly found at the Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea, located at 200 Artisan Way, just off Interstate 75 at Berea, Exit 77. The center's exhibits, shopping and travel information areas are open daily from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., with the cafe open from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Admission is free.

The center currently features works by more than 700 artisans from more than 100 counties across the Commonwealth. A gallery exhibit, "Repurposed & Recycled: Works by Kentucky Artisans," is on display through Sept. 6; and in the lobby, "Kentucky Bourbon: Distillation and Inspiration," is on display through July 6. For information about the center's events call 859-985-5448, visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/kentucky.artisan.center, or go to the center's website at www.kentuckyartisancenter.ky.gov.

Kentucky Artisan Center at Berea is an agency in the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet of the Commonwealth of Kentucky



Photos, left to right: Melissa Oesch demonstrates her recycled book binding at the Kentucky Artisan Center; materials used in book binding; samples of books by Melissa Oesch made from recycled materials